

Small Essay

on  
Typhus Fever

Respectfully submitted

To

The Faculty

of  
The Homoeopathic Medical College

of

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One thousand eight hundred and fifty  
two

By

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of

Maine

An essay  
on  
Typhus fever.

The disease denominated typhus, or typhus fever is a peculiar febrile disease, distinct from all others, distinguished by a peculiar group of symptoms and produced probably by a peculiar cause. The origin of the term (from the Greek typhos stupor) indicates the general character of affection.

The symptoms of this remarkable disease are too numerous to be described particularly in one short essay. We shall therefore content ourselves with a description of the more prominent and characteristic symptoms of the affection.

Symptoms. Typhus rarely sets in with symptoms those marked symptoms which are observable in other forms of fever. It is usually preceded by certain morbid sensations such as slight pains in the

head back and limbs with a sense of  
soreness and weariness after exertion.  
Some degree of gastric derangement also  
exists. In general these symptoms give  
no alarm and means to ward off an attack  
are seldom employed. After the lapse of a  
few days or a week there is usually an  
increase of the above symptoms. There is a  
severe pain in the head, back, loins,  
and lower extremities, sometimes accom-  
panied with nausea, and vomiting there  
are, also, great weakness, and prostration  
of strength. Alternate chills and heat  
great restlessness and sleeplessness  
anxiety and depression of spirits now  
supervene. The pulse is frequent irr-  
egular and feeble. The bowels are con-

The febrile condition is marked  
by the usual symptoms of a hot dry skin  
rapid pulse furrowed tongue pain in

the head and sometimes by vomiting  
and vomiting generally there is great  
~~thirst~~ thirst though sometimes it is  
inverting. The patient seldom has any  
appetite for food. The tongue at this stage  
is usually covered with a white coat or  
with one a little tinged with yellow.  
The face presents a peculiar aspect that  
of a dark red or of a dusky hue with  
injection of the eyes and no after  
congestion of the mucous membrane  
of the nostrils and fauces. The pain  
in the head which is usually seated  
in the frontal portion is intense. The  
mind often gives evidence of sluggish-  
ness and occasionally slight aberration  
is observable. The bowels are cos-  
tive and no stools are procured but  
by artificial means. The patient is  
extremely restless and obtains no

refreshing sleep. If the disease is allowed  
to progress it in a short time attains  
its height. The heat of the surface is  
intense and of that peculiar character  
designated by the phrase calor mordax.  
The temperature of the body afterwards rises  
to the alarming height of  $106^{\circ}$  or  $109^{\circ}$  F.  
The pulse is alarmingly rapid the  
artery at the wrist giving 120 or 160  
even strokes even in the minute.  
The respiration is also frequent and  
when examined by the stethoscope  
is found to be feeble and imperfect  
in the back and lower part of the  
chest which is also dull on percussion.  
Meanwhile there is a paroxysmal  
tendency in the febrile symptoms  
and exacerbation generally takes  
place towards night and remission  
in the morning.

A characteristic eruption makes its appearance which entitles the disease to be ranked among the exanthemata. This eruption is confined to no particular portion of the external surface but appears on the neck trunk and extremities. It consists of small redish spots differing in magnitude from the eighth quarter or half inch in diameter or they may appear as mere specks on the surface. These spots differ in color according to circumstances or the stage of the disease. They may be red purplish violet or almost black. They are seldom elevated above the surface and will often disappear on being pressed with the finger but will immediately return on removing the pressure except when they

assume a very dark or blackish  
color. This eruption may appear from  
the third to the thirteenth day though  
usually it makes its appearance from  
the fifth to the eighth day and  
continues eleven or twelve days.  
Occasionally it disappears and after  
a short time makes its appearance  
again. The tongue at this stage  
usually assumes a brownish color  
and is more or less dry especially  
in the middle while in some  
cases a dark sordes begins to collect  
upon the teeth gums and lips.  
Sometimes the tongue is clean  
and glossy and sometimes in the  
progress of the disease it assumes  
an appearance not unlike that of  
raw beef. The patient in general  
has no appetite though there is

not that loathing of food which  
is often experienced in other fevers  
The bowels are generally confined no  
stools are procured except by artificial  
means and these are extremely  
offensive Occasional diarrhoea  
takes place The abdomen is some  
times quite flat sometimes <sup>moderately</sup> ~~moderately~~  
erectly swollen and tympanitic  
The urine is in small quantities  
and high colored occasionally  
it is wholly suppressed sometimes  
bleeding at the nose occurs a pecu-  
liar and characteristic odor exha-  
les from the body which can be  
~~more easily~~ <sup>more easily</sup> appreciated than  
described  
Nervous symptoms are now prom-  
inent Though the headache  
and general pains may be less

severe there is a morbid sensitiveness of the skin which causes the patient to complain when pressure is made upon any part of the body. Dizziness, confused vision, humming or ringing in the ears and partial deafness are not unusual symptoms.

As the disease progresses the characteristic stupor is more and more developed amounting sometimes though not often to a comatose state of the brain. In general the patient will answer questions correctly though he does it reluctantly being inclined to say but <sup>those</sup> are to remain in perfect silence. When requested to protrude his tongue he does so

partially but often forgets  
to draw it back. He takes but  
little notice of what is passing  
around him being totally  
indifferent to nearly every pass-  
ing event. He sometimes gazes  
about the room with a vacant st-  
are his countenance assume  
ing an appearance not unlike  
that of a drunken man. Someti-  
mely the comatose gives place to a  
low muttering delirium. The  
patient is entirely unconscious  
of pain or suffering. If asked  
how he feels he uniformly re-  
plies that he feels well. Now  
and then great restlessness and  
fascitation occur with muscle-  
or twitchings in various parts of  
the body.

Symptoms of debility usually accompanying those of perverted function while consciousness remains one of the most distressing sensations is a sense of utter helplessness. The patient often feels himself to be sinking down into the earth while he is perfectly destitute of adequate power to prevent the misfortune. This to the patient is often a very distressing sensation. At this stage of the disease Syncope often occurs even when slight exertions are made and sinking spells come on him which indicate the greatest danger. As an accompaniment there

is a sense of great oppression in  
the chest. The patient feels  
as if deprived of air and as if  
suffocation would inevitably  
take place.

If there be no abatement of  
the fever it now passes over to  
the third stage in which the  
patient lies on his back ~~sinking~~  
~~sinking~~ sinking down in <sup>depression</sup> ~~the~~  
from utter prostration his  
eyes half closed his mouth par-  
tially open his hands constantly in  
motions grasping at imaginary  
objects while he is uttering an in-  
coherent and unintelligible jir-  
gon. His tongue is dry and thickly  
coated and deglutition is extremely  
difficult from the want of muscular  
energy. The pupil is sometimes

dilate and sometimes contract.  
Occasionally involuntary discharges from the bowels and bladder take <sup>place</sup> and sometimes the urine is suppressed. The surface has in a great measure lost its sensibility the strongest irritants make little or no impression. The extremities are cold the skin pale the features collapsed and of an earthy hue. The pulse is frequent and fluttering small and feeble and often scarcely perceptible at the wrist.

Even in this state the case is not desperate and suitable remedies have been successful. But if death takes place it is generally without violence. The respiration becomes slower and slower.

the pulse weaker and weaker  
until the patient ceases to breathe  
and the heart ceases to move If  
death occur at an earlier stage of the  
feveritis in general with some vio-  
lence and is apparently far more  
distressing

When convalescence takes place  
previous to collapse it is usually pre-  
ceded by less frequency of pulse by  
moisture on the tongue by a relaxed  
state of the skin and by returning  
consciousness Sometimes it is  
 ushered in by an event which may  
be regarded as forming a crisis Thus  
a copious perspiration may occur  
or there may be a copious discharge  
of urine or the patient may fall  
into a quiet slumber and awake  
free from delirium and much improved

When convalescence takes place subsequent to collapse it is usually slow and almost imperceptible for a time. The fever having spent its fury leaves the patient in a state of extreme exhaustion. The vital powers being almost extinct time immemorially and health can return and the natural vigor of the frame be restored. The fever is usually succeeded after the lapse of some time by sound health.

The duration of typhus depends somewhat on the climate where it occurs as well as ~~on~~ other circumstances. When it terminates favorably it may have a run of two weeks or more one week in the advance one in the formed stage and <sup>one</sup> in the decline. Sometimes

it terminates sooner sometimes  
not as soon I have known it  
to run twenty eight days without  
any perceptible abatement  
Fatal cases may terminate at any  
period sometimes death occurs  
within twenty-four hours before reaction  
takes place sometimes on the  
fourth or fifth day But in  
general it does not take place  
until about the end of the second  
week It may occur at a much  
later period

varieties The varieties of typhus arise  
from the difference of degree and  
from its complication with other  
disease Sometimes it is very  
mild and terminates favorably  
without much medical aid At  
other times it is ushered in by

the most alarming symptoms  
and terminates fatally without  
any reaction or with a very im-  
perfect one or the peculiar form  
of typhus may be partially  
developed at the first and grad-  
ually increase in violence until  
fully established. This fever is  
not infrequently associated with  
other forms of disease. Pneumo-  
nia often assumes the typhus  
form. When this is the case the  
patient coughs and expectorates  
a rusty bloody sputa. There are  
dullness on percussion and the  
absence of the respiratory mur-  
mur. The crepitant or the subcrepi-  
tant rale is heard. It may also  
become associated with the bilious  
and typhoid fevers.

There is generally a strong tendency <sup>anatomical</sup> to a speedy putrefaction after death. The brain is found to be in an abnormal state. There is venous congestion within the cranium and also the effusion of serum into the ventricle or under the arachnoid and the substance of the brain is sometimes darker than in health though in other cases it is unaltered or nearly so.

The mucous membrane of the nostrils and fauces as also of the bronchial tubes are found in an inflamed state. The lower portion of the posterior part of the lungs is also inflamed though it is not often found to have passed into the state of hepatization.

The gastric mucous membrane is found in a diseased state but that

of the intestinal canal is in general healthy

The glands of Peyer are healthy except in some rare cases when it is presumable that the fever was associated with the enteric

Sometimes the spleen is softened and enlarged at other times it is in a normal condition. The liver is either healthy or enlarged or engorged with blood. The heart is sometimes healthy sometimes softened and dusky hue of inner surface of the eyes the cause.

Among the causes of Typhus may be reckoned unhealthy localities ill ventilated apartments unwholesome food exposure to damp night air and to the peculiar miasma of certain climates

By some medical writers  
it is thought to be propagated  
by contagion whether or not this is  
the fact I shall not now attempt  
to decide It may I apprehend be  
thus propagated where there is a  
predisposition in <sup>the</sup> organism to  
the disease

Diagn

The more characteristic sym-  
ptoms of typhus along with fever  
are prostration of strength a  
dark red and dusky hue of coun-  
tenance suffusion of the eyes stupor  
dark spots about the tongue teeth  
the constipation of the bowels in  
the earliest stage the peculiar  
odor the peculiar eruption and  
the collapse of the last stage  
The disease with which it is often

associated and often conformed  
in the enteric or typhoid but  
there is a essential difference  
between the two diseases for  
general the peculiar symptoms  
of typhus are more clearly develop-  
ed in the first stage than  
are those of enteric. The bowels are  
not so easily affected by artificial means  
and when stools are procured they  
are of a darker color and more offen-  
sive. Hemorrhages from the bowels which  
frequently take place in the advanced  
stages of typhoid seldom occur in typhus  
as also epistaxes or bleeding at the nose.  
The characteristic eruption of the one  
differs from that of the other. It  
appears at a more advanced stage of  
the disease is less regular in form is  
of a darker color is not confined to

the chest and abdomen but it extends  
equally over the extremities is less  
elevated and is not so easily affected by  
pressure. Sometimes there is an eruption  
of a lighter color and more easily effected  
by pressure not unlike the one that ap-  
pears in typhoid. But then it is found  
distributed in connection with the other  
fever over the different parts of the  
body. In typhus the abdomen is flat  
and perfectly free from tympanities which  
is not the case in typhoid. The signs  
of the consolidation of the posterior part  
of the lungs are much more frequent in  
the former and the dry sibilant rales  
of bronchial inflammation in the latter.  
The anatomical ~~and~~ <sup>is</sup> character of the  
two diseases ~~are~~ very different. In  
enteric the glands of Peyer as also  
the mesenteric are found to be in

a diseased state but in typhus the  
glands are always healthy except when  
the two diseases amalgamate The  
spleen is much more frequently enlarged  
and softened in typhoid

The young are said to be more in danger  
of having this disease than are the old  
but it proves more fatal to the old than  
it does to the young The mortality is  
said to be much greater among the  
blacks than it is among the whites  
The favorable indications have been  
mentioned already The unfavorable  
are great prostration of strength great  
alteration of the blood or severe local  
disease Among the first are extreme  
weak or absent pulse coldness of the  
surface and sudden fading of the  
erofation Among the second are the

abundance of dark colored petechiae  
copious hemorrhages a very turbed  
congestive fœtid breath and a  
purple appearance of the extremities

Among the third are violent delir-  
ium or profound coma a greatly dilated  
or contracted pupil stertorous breathing  
which indicates of a disease of the  
brain laborious respiration or short-  
ness of breath which indicates exten-  
sive consolidation of the lungs

Treat.

The remedies which are generally  
indicated are the following

Bell. Styr. Stria Bry. Rus F  
Mer. Sol. Nux. v. Phos. acid  
Opium <sup>Sp. op.</sup> ~~Lupul.~~ Ann. Ars. Carbor  
and some others

In the inflammatory stage acanite  
may often be employed with great

benefit the characteristic symptoms need not be mentioned here

*Belladonna* This remedy is indicated when there are alternate chills and heat Red sparkling eyes or a wild appearance of the eyes with a dilated pupil Flashes of hearing Burning thirst with aversion to drink or a desire to drink with inability to swallow Sleeplessness or restless sleep Startling during sleep or on waking Furious delirium with grasping at flocks Violent headache especially in the forehead Vertigo on lifting the head from the pillow Dry lips dry and red tongue or the tongue may be covered with a dirty coating Loss of appetite nausea and loathing of food Constipation of the bowels

Bright yellow or scanty red urine  
hurried breathing frequent pulse  
hurried feeble or indistinct speech  
cough with pains in the chest

### *Hyoscyamus*

Furious delirium with all sorts  
of visions Sleeplessness or restless-  
ness or a comatose state interrupted  
by delirium which is sometimes  
blond and sometimes of a furious  
character Great debility especially  
of the hands on <sup>heat</sup> moving them  
Jactitation of the muscles and  
grasping at imaginary objects pale  
or red and hot face with bluish  
cheeks Dim staring eyes with blue  
margins around them or red spark-  
ling eyes with dilated and contracted  
pupil alternately Hardness of hearing  
with buzzing and ringing in the ears

Dry parched tongue covered with  
a brownish coating

*Stemonium*

When there is a beating head-  
ache especially in the vertex with  
fainting turns obscuration of sight  
and hardness of hearing Delirium  
with violent tossing about dilated  
insensible pupil Constiveness  
Coma and stertorous breathing

*Bryonia*

Chills succeeded by <sup>heat</sup> all over the  
body but especially about the head  
profuse sweat or dry and chapped  
skin or moist and clammy sur-  
face Dry brownish and cracked  
lips and tongue aversion to food  
with nausea and a desire to vomit  
or vomiting of ~~bitter~~ bilious matter  
Constipation or diarrhoea red

brown or bright yellow urine with  
a yellowish sediment Oppressive or  
stupifying headache or pain as if  
the brain were torn or bruised  
Delirium day and night vertigo  
and hardness of hearing Sleepless-  
ness with tossing about or a con-  
stant desire to sleep Frequent  
irregular small and intermittent  
pulse Short oppressed respiration  
Stitches in the chest or side Tri-  
table and vehement disposition  
Despair of ones recovery Petechae

Rus Toxicodendron

great prostration of strength - the  
patient being unable to turn  
himself in bed Stupifying head-  
ache with vertigo Low muttering  
delirium grasping at inanimate  
objects Sleeplessness or comas

Stertorous breathing Confusion  
of ideas or loss of consciousness Burning  
or redness of the cheeks hardness of  
hearing dry mouth and fauces  
Brownish or blackish lips and  
tongue or trembling and red  
tongue Great thirst Loss of  
appetite

This remedy may in general  
be employed in preference to  
others when this fever becomes  
associated with the typhoid

intermittent Effusions of  
vertigo stupefaction or a sense  
of fullness and confusion of the  
head with dullness and inhab-  
ility to think headache over the  
forehead and on the vertex but  
especially on the forehead The  
tongue may have a thick coat

tinged with a dirty yellow or it  
may be clear or nearly so with  
a bitter-foul taste in the mouth  
Restlessness anxiety and tossing  
about constipation of the bowels  
or diarrhoea dark brownish urine  
great debility Sleeplessness no  
delirium or scarcely perceptible  
incomplete These various symptoms  
and great sensitiveness of all the  
organs with prevailing gastric  
bilious symptoms Prostration as if  
intoxicated with loss of consciousness  
prostration of strength Red burning  
cheeks heat in the palms of the  
hands White or black dry tongue  
with red and cracked eyes Dry lips  
and thirst with aversion to liquids  
Aversion to food Teasing pains in  
the head with vertigo Colicky pains

palpitation of the heart painful  
pressure and tensions in the region  
of the stomach and hypochondria  
sensation in the limbs as if burn-  
ed and paralyzed vehement  
febrile disposition

Phosphoric Acid  
may be employed when there is  
complete listlessness stupefaction  
and dulness prostration of strength  
taciturn staring dull look with  
glassy eyes Sleeplessness at night  
with tossing about or great drowsiness  
and sleep or muttering delirium  
and grasping at flocks constipation  
or diarrhoea brown red urine with  
redish sediment

Opium  
Came with stertorous breathing  
open mouth muttering delirium

Should there be great prostration  
of strength depression of the lower  
jaw dim and half closed eyes slow  
breathing with open mouth  
alternate chills and heat congestion  
of blood to the head or face circum-  
scribed redness of the cheeks debil-  
itating sweats red tongue con-  
stipation bill will especially  
on waking *Syapodium* may  
be administered

*Asarum* is a remedy of some moment  
when there is coma with delirium  
and grasping at flocks *Stemon*  
breathing and involuntary  
discharges of feces and urine  
all when there is abundance  
of dark colored putrescent with  
coma delirium loss of consciousness

frequent and sudden starting  
and sighing great prostration  
with depression of the lower jaw  
open mouth with glassy eyes

Arsenicum should be employed

It may be given alternately  
with *Carbo vegetabilis* or alone

Other remedies are sometimes  
required but need not be men-  
tioned here

Diet

Attention to diet is all important  
Pure cold water may be used for  
drink In the early stages the  
food should be very light It  
may consist of weak gruels made  
of oatmeal or of Indian meal and  
water barley water and the like  
All stimulating food must be  
carefully avoided At a more advanced  
period when the symptoms of debility

begin to show themselves it will be  
necessary to support of the patient  
by a more generous diet taking <sup>care</sup> how  
~~ever~~ to prohibit all stimulating  
articles of nutriment Thick gruels  
may now be given flavoured <sup>with</sup> sugar  
and even with a little good wine  
Beef tea or chicken both may  
sometimes be given It will often  
be desirable to give these in certain  
quantities and at certain intervals  
so as to insure that enough has been  
taken A wineglassful may be  
taken every two or three hours or  
at longer intervals according to the  
apparent strength of the patient  
A cup of tea with dry toast or crout  
cracker properly prepared may  
often be allowed morning and  
evening